United Nations A/65/PV.37

General Assembly
Sixty-fifth session

Official Records

37th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 26 October 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Deiss ..... (Switzerland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Carrión-Mena (Ecuador), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 41 (*continued*)

Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/83)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.3)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): Members will recall that, at the 36th plenary meeting, the Assembly adopted draft resolution A/65/L.3 as resolution 65/6. We will now continue with the list of speakers in explanation of the vote.

Before giving the floor to the speakers in explanation of vote, I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to a maximum of 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Minn (Myanmar): Given the similar impacts felt because of its own social and political system and its own path of development, Myanmar fully sympathizes with the Cuban people and understands the extent of the hardship and suffering caused by the embargo against them, in particular the elderly, women and children. The will of the international community has been clearly expressed every year with the adoption by an overwhelming majority of States of resolutions calling for an end to the embargo. My delegation believes that it is the legitimate right of each nation to choose its own social and political systems and its own path of development. The embargo against Cuba is contrary not only to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, but also to international law. For those reasons, Myanmar voted in favour, as it has in previous years, of the resolution entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Mr. Mac-Donald (Suriname): I thank you, Sir, for allowing me to speak in explanation of vote under agenda item 41, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba".

Suriname has always been against this embargo and has therefore fully supported and voted in favour of successive General Assembly resolutions regarding this matter. Suriname would like to reiterate once again its position on this crucial issue.

The Government of the Republic of Suriname remains committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to upholding the principles of international law. In this regard, the unilateral enforcement of the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Likewise, the continuation for another year of the trade embargo against Cuba, which will remain in force

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

10-60583 (E)

Please recycle

until 14 September 2011, remains cause for great concern against the background of the deepening impact of the current global economic and financial crisis, which will further aggravate the hardships of the people of Cuba.

Suriname therefore reiterates its call for an end to the embargo, which is contrary to international law and negatively affects regional cooperation in the Caribbean region.

Finally, my delegation would also like to align itself with the statements delivered this morning by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Permanent Representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the Permanent Representative of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Mr. Ovsyanko (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Today, the delegation of Belarus, along with 186 other States Members of the United Nations, voted in support of resolution 65/6, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. The Republic of Belarus has consistently condemned the use of unilateral economic measures as a means of exerting political and economic pressure on developing countries. It believes that they run counter to the fundamental principles of international law and the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and other international legal instruments.

We affirm the inalienable right of every State to decide on its own model of development and believe that any unilateral attempt by an individual State to change the internal political system of another State by use of military, political, economic or other pressure is inadmissible.

Barely a month ago, the leaders of the Member States discussed in this very Hall the measures that needed to be taken by the international community in order to fulfil their obligations under the Millennium Development Goals and to guarantee a decent standard of living for the citizens of their countries. We are convinced that the application of coercive economic measures is the type of instrument that creates serious obstacles to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, impairs the vital interests of the people of a country subjected to sanctions, and violates the rights of its peoples to a dignified existence, thus contributing to the emergence of political instability and the outbreak of conflicts.

We consider that, in the current conditions and as a result of the continued consequences of the world financial and economic crisis, the use of unilateral sanctions and coercive measures is especially inappropriate. This is not the first time that we have heard appeals from the rostrum of the General Assembly for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. Today, we have adopted the nineteenth successive General Assembly resolution on this question. We express the hope that our collective voice will be heard this time.

Mr. Bart (Saint Kitts and Nevis): Saint Kitts and Nevis would like to add its voice in support of agenda item 41 on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba and to give its reasons for voting in favour of resolution 65/6. This is an extremely important debate that speaks to the very core of international law, sovereignty, non-intervention and the strengthened role of the United Nations in international affairs.

Saint Kitts and Nevis has very good relations with the United States of America. That country remains one of our closest and strongest partners. We respect the role that the United States of America has played in international relations and in the establishment and promotion of this body. The United States of America is a global leader and we acknowledge and remain grateful for its role in international affairs.

However, my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the representative of Republic of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the Permanent Representative of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas on behalf of the Caribbean Community.

Saint Kitts and Nevis, in its contribution to the Secretary-General's report (A/65/83) on this matter, advised that we do not support or apply any laws or measures that affect the free flow of international trade. We also advised that we do not apply laws with extraterritorial effect that impinge on the sovereignty of other States and the legitimate interests of entities or persons under their jurisdiction.

This is a principled position that extends to all States members of this body. Saint Kitts and Nevis therefore feels very strongly about bringing to a close the embargo imposed on Cuba. Cuba is one of the

closest allies of Saint Kitts and Nevis. That country is a pan Caribbean partner and has aided in the development of the health-care system and other areas in Saint Kitts and Nevis. There is much that the international community has benefited and can benefit from in cooperating with Cuba, just as Saint Kitts and Nevis has benefited.

We see this embargo as a burden on our brothers and sisters in Cuba. The negative impact on the economy of that small island developing State is quite profound and unfair to the people of Cuba. The international community remains in the grip of a global recession, and while many of us rely on a partnership with other countries to recover, Cuba remains stunned by the embargo. This goes against the very principles of partnership for which this United Nations stands.

The fact that the majority of Member States traditionally vote in favour of the draft resolution signifies that the overriding sentiment is that the embargo is wrong. We implore all Member States to respect the sanctity of the General Assembly and the decisions it makes. Failure to do so undermines the functioning of the United Nations system.

It is my delegation's hope that the two countries — Cuba and the United States of America — can improve their relationships and embark upon a process of partnership and cooperation. There is much that we can learn from each other, but the embargo remains an impediment to that process. That is why Saint Kitts and Nevis supports resolution 65/6 and voted in favour of it. We reiterate our call on both countries to find common ground so that the entire international community can move on from this impasse.

Mr. Luangmuninthone (Lao People's Democratic Republic): The Lao People's Democratic Republic associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic reiterates its opposition to the continued unilateral imposition of the economic, commercial and financial embargo upon the Republic of Cuba by the Government of the United States of America. The embargo imposed on Cuba not only runs counter to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, but also violates the fundamental principle of the sovereignty, equality and right to development of the peoples of all nations. Furthermore, it continues to cause untold suffering and hardship to the Cuban people and to hinder Cuba's socio-economic progress and development.

The adoption of the relevant resolution for the nineteenth consecutive year, with the overwhelming support of the General Assembly, indicates the international community's rejection of unilateral coercive economic measures in general and the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba in particular. The resolution we have just adopted once again confirms the friendship and solidarity of the international community with the Cuban people and the call for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the embargo against Cuba.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic believes in the importance of resolving the difference between countries through peaceful dialogue and negotiation on the basis of equality and mutual respect for sovereignty. In this spirit, the Lao People's Democratic Republic reaffirms its continued support for the resolution of the General Assembly under this agenda item and voted in favour of resolution 65/6.

Mr. Sefue (United Republic of Tanzania): The General Assembly has adopted successive resolutions calling upon States to abide by the Charter of the United Nations and norms of international law, and urging them to refrain from enacting laws and taking measures that are damaging to the legitimate rights and interests of other States. Regrettably, however, this just appeal by the international community has not always been heeded, and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly remain unimplemented.

The economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba has created huge difficulties for the Cuban people in their efforts to achieve economic and social development and carry out reform. It has seriously undermined the efforts of the Cuban Government to eliminate poverty and improve the living standards of its people, and it has inflicted enormous suffering on Cuban women and children.

The embargo has also impeded the normal useful economic and trade exchanges between Cuba and other countries, and gravely encroached upon their legitimate rights and interests. In several areas, the embargo

frustrates efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Today, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania once again voted in favour of the resolution to end this embargo. This vote also expresses our solidarity with like-minded members in opposing the application of unilateral trade measures against Cuba, with extraterritorial effects on the peoples and economies of other States. Tanzania perceives these unilateral measures as being contrary to the spirit of multilateralism and against the Charter of the United Nations.

Tanzania enjoys healthy and sound relations with the people and Government of Cuba and cooperates with that country in various socio economic endeavours, including capacity-building in health, education and sports. Tanzania believes that cooperation between the two countries would flourish further if the unilaterally imposed blockade were lifted.

Tanzania enjoys excellent relations and a robust development partnership with the United States of America, and it is in that spirit that my Government once again joins other Member States in urging the United States to listen to repeated and increasing calls by the international community to finally bring an end to the embargo and to fully adhere to the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of its neighbour country.

Mr. Abubaker (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): The imposition of sanctions and embargoes has never been an appropriate solution to disputes between States. Such coercive measures send an unequivocal message to the world that the language of force and hegemony governs relations between States. It also reflects the authoritarianism and arrogance that hamper progress towards comprehensive peace and friendly relations among States through the settlement of disputes and conflicts by peaceful means.

The Charter of the United Nations stipulates the principle of the pacific settlement of disputes through negotiation, conciliation, fact-finding, agreement or recourse to international arbitration on the basis of the sovereign equality of States and the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of States and full respect for the sovereignty of States irrespective of their size, population or political and economic system. In this regard, my delegation calls on all members of the international community to comply with those principles.

Having been subject to an economic blockade in the past decade, my country is very well aware of the nefarious consequences of such coercive measures on people, their health, education, development, and the full enjoyment of their human rights. My country therefore resolutely opposes unilateral measures imposed by States for political ends, and expresses its grave concern at the persistence of certain States in applying coercive, economic, unilateral and extraterritorial sanctions that clearly run counter to the principles of international law, in particular those of the sovereign equality of States and non-interference in their internal affairs. There is no doubt that the application of such sanctions only aggravates human suffering, exacerbates disputes and fosters hatred among peoples. We call on the United States to lift the blockade against Cuba and to promote good relations in the interests of both peoples.

My delegation voted in favour of resolution 65/6, calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba, because we feel that the imposition of sanctions and embargoes are not the best means of settling disputes between States. I hope that the resolution will contribute to the peaceful settlement of the dispute between these two countries without resort to unilateral coercive economic measures.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations provide for the right of countries to exercise their sovereignty within their own territories and to enjoy non-interference by others in their internal affairs. Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has adopted resolutions and decisions that emphasize the sacrosanct nature of these purposes and principles. All States Members should therefore respect the Charter, which represents the constitution of the Organization and its pre eminent frame of reference.

Because the unilateral embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba and new measures aimed at reinforcing that embargo contravene the principles and rules of international law and international humanitarian law — as well as rules governing relations among countries, especially the principles of the sovereign equality of States and of non-interference in their internal affairs, and the freedom of

international navigation and trade — the embargo is definitely illegal and runs counter to the norms of relations among States.

It also represents a challenge, unprecedented in international law, to the credibility of the legality of United States policies themselves. The embargo, which has been imposed on Cuba for over 50 years, has created a unilateral legal precedent contrary to international law, which we reject. It has exposed Cuba to harmful economic, social and political effects and deepened the suffering of the Cuban people, especially children and the elderly.

The embargo puts the United States of America in direct and unenviable opposition to the international community. It has hindered the tireless efforts of the Cuban people to achieve prosperity and progress and continues to harm the Cuban economy. Losses have exceeded tens of billions of dollars, not including indirect losses estimated to be in the tens of billions of dollars. The embargo also harms the social and cultural development of the Cuban people and deprives them of the opportunities and benefits resulting from free trade. It directly violates the basic freedoms and human rights of the Cuban people, including the right to life and development.

The General Assembly has discussed this agenda item for over 19 consecutive years and has adopted numerous resolutions in that regard by overwhelming majorities. However, regrettably, the economic, financial and commercial embargo against Cuba is still in effect.

The support of 187 Member States for the resolution only emphasizes the near unanimous determination of the international community to put an end to the totally illegal embargo against Cuba. Resort to unjustified coercive economic measures against other countries, regardless of their political orientation, is unacceptable to the international community, which has repeatedly rejected the unilateral embargo against Cuba, now expanded under the national laws of the United States, including the domestic legislation known as the Helms-Burton Act. That law has extraterritorial effect, prejudicing the sovereignty of other nations in their dealings with Cuba in contravention of the principle of equal sovereignty of States and the principles of international law.

Given its mandate, the General Assembly is called on to take the measures necessary to put an end to the unilateral embargo, economic sanctions and other aggressive extraterritorial policies of the United States — all in contravention of international law — against its direct neighbours and other countries that are geographically distant from the United States.

In this respect, my delegation hopes that all embargoes imposed by the United States against Cuba and many other Member States — including my country, Syria — will be ended. We also hope that the voice of the international community, as expressed through the General Assembly today, will be met with respect by the United States and that it will come to enjoy the full support of that country's legislative bodies.

It is quite significant and worth noting that Israel voted against resolution 65/6, in opposition to the vast majority of the international community. Israel's vote clearly highlights the validity of the international community's negative view and assessment of that country. Again, Israel has acted contrary to international law. It represents an isolated minority of the international community. Israel's vote has made matters worse for the United States, whose Administration has been seeking to return to the logic of dialogue between countries in conflict.

It is high time that the rules of international law were respected and that different points of view allowed to prevail. Israel's vote for the continued unilateral embargo against Cuba clearly shows the world that it is taking direct advantage of that embargo in a desperate attempt to justify its own embargo against Gaza, which has also been internationally rejected. Israel's desperate embargo against Gaza, I repeat, is not tolerated by the international community. As a result Israel feels compelled to support another equally illegal embargo — that imposed, contrary to international law, by the United States against Cuba. Is there any position that could hurt the American position more than the vote of Israel?

Ms. Alsharif (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 65/6, which was introduced by Cuba in the presence of its Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom we welcome and congratulate on the overwhelming international support it enjoys. We confirm in this respect the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which enshrine equal sovereignty among States, non-interference in their domestic affairs, and

freedom of navigation and trade, which are also guaranteed in a number of international legal instruments.

We express grave concern regarding the ongoing enactment, application and enforcement by certain States of unilateral laws and extraterritorial measures affecting the sovereignty and interests of other States, resulting in negative repercussions that extend beyond national borders, contravene the principles of international legitimacy, and hinder the freedom of international trade. We associate ourselves with the statements made by the representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The General Assembly is considering agenda item 41 for the nineteenth consecutive year in the context of the increasing awareness of and broad rejection by Member States of the taking of unilateral, coercive and extraterritorial economic measures. This was clearly expressed in today's voting results. Ongoing support for the relevant resolution year after year is a clear expression of the wide-scale rejection of the unilateral embargo imposed on Cuba and its identification as a means of political and economic coercion. The embargo is a clear and flagrant violation of the international architecture and fundamental principles on which the United Nations Charter is based, in addition to international law and the norms that govern commercial, economic and financial relations among countries.

At the Second South Summit held in Doha in June 2005, the imposition of laws and legislation of extraterritorial effect was rejected and all other coercive economic measures, including sanctions imposed unilaterally on developing countries, were condemned. At their fifteenth summit, held in Sharm el Sheikh in July 2009, NAM heads of State and Government stressed their steadfast position on the necessity of ending the economic, trade and financial embargo imposed on Cuba. At the 33rd meeting of the foreign ministers of the Group of 77 and China, held in September 2009, the representatives of the Group rejected the imposition of transnational laws and systems and condemned all forms of coercive economic measures, including sanctions imposed unilaterally on developing countries. In addition, the final statement of the ministers for foreign affairs once again expressed the urgent need to put an end to these measures immediately.

The Government of the Sudan follows a policy based on full respect for international law, the principles of the United Nations Charter, sovereign equality among countries, and non-interference in the internal affairs of others. In accordance with the Sudan's position based on the aforementioned principles, my delegation condemns the imposition of economic and political sanctions on developing countries because they constitute a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and have a destructive impact on the efforts of those countries to achieve sustainable development.

In this respect, we confirm the Sudan's commitment to resolution 65/6 because the Government of National Unity does not enact or enforce laws or take any measures whose application beyond national borders could affect the sovereignty of other States. Hence, the Government of the Sudan calls for the abolition of laws that impose such measures.

My delegation is opposed to unilateral sanctions that are tied to political demands, such as those imposed by the United States on my country since November 1997. Such sanctions are a violation of the legitimate right of the Sudanese Government and people to choose their own political, economic and social systems. They damage the living standards of the Sudanese people and obstruct the Government's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, eliminate poverty, and expand access to education, health care and the technologies necessary to enhancing agricultural and human development. Such unilateral economic sanctions have affected all regions of the Sudan. They have also exacerbated the humanitarian situation and development in Darfur.

Notwithstanding the economic and trade embargo imposed on my country, the Sudan is still strengthening its bilateral, economic and political relations with developing countries, countries of the South and developed countries, and this has enhanced its economic and social development.

Bilateral relations between the Sudan and Cuba were strengthened following the joint ministerial meeting between the two countries held in Havana in June 2007 to promote cooperation in all fields. The assignment of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan to the United Nations as

Ambassador to Cuba in December 2007 was a step forward in the promotion of our relations. In addition, the Sudan took part in the ministerial meeting of the NAM Coordinating Bureau in April 2009, which endorsed the necessity to end the economic embargo imposed on Cuba.

My delegation calls for the establishment of a better life for every individual and a better world for all, in which countries large and small coexist peacefully. Such peaceful coexistence requires the commitment of all countries to the main principles of the United Nations Charter and to managing their relations in an appropriate manner.

In this respect, we urge States that have applied laws or taken unilateral measures that affect the sovereignty of other States to take the necessary action to abolish and annul them in order to preserve the right of other States to live in sovereignty, respect the principles of the United Nations Charter and undertake mutual cooperation for the sake of peace, development and the welfare of all peoples of the world.

Mr. Bui The Giang (Viet Nam): Viet Nam, as in all previous years, voted in favour of the resolution under agenda item 41, introduced at today's General Assembly meeting by the Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

Nineteen years have passed since the General Assembly adopted the first resolution demanding an end to the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba. Throughout these 19 past years, the General Assembly has annually adopted a resolution on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba, with increasingly consensual support. This year, as last year, the resolution has enjoyed record support in its 19 year history, with 187 out of 192 Member States voting in its favour.

As a grave violation of international law, including international laws relating to the freedom of trade and navigation, sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, this embargo runs counter to universally recognized norms governing relations between sovereign countries, regardless of their political systems and their choices of their paths of development, as well as to the fundamental principles and purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

As such, this embargo, which has endured for half a century, has caused phenomenal financial and material losses to the Cuban economy. It has, at the same time, represented a major obstacle to Cuba's social development, affecting the Cuban people's efforts to maintain a normal life in respect and dignity, let alone an improved life as humankind moves towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It has also impacted all those who have wished and worked to foster legitimate, normal and mutually beneficial cultural, economic, commercial and financial relations with Cuba, including an increasing proportion of the American people.

By voting in favour of resolution 65/6, my delegation reiterates Viet Nam's unswerving position that disputes among States should and can only be resolved through peaceful dialogue and negotiations, on the basis of equality, mutual respect for each other's independence and sovereignty, and the principle of the non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

We again joined the overwhelming majority of Member States in requesting that the Government of the United States of America bring an immediate end to its unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba in order to lessen the hardships unduly inflicted upon the Cuban people, reduce tension and create an atmosphere conducive to constructive efforts towards the early normalization of relations between the two countries in the interests of peace, stability and development of the region and of the world as a whole.

The Government and people of Viet Nam once again reaffirm their support for and solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba. Together with the international community, we stand ready to continue to assist Cuba, as we always have done, to overcome the consequences of the embargo.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): We welcome the presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba. I want to thank him for the detailed briefing he delivered on the impact of the United States economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. Nigeria believes that it is the right of the Cuban people to independently decide on how they manage their future. Consequently, as in all previous years, Nigeria voted in favour of resolution 65/6.

Nigeria, like the overwhelming majority of the international community, opposes the imposition of an economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. We consider the extraterritorial application of unilateral measures as contrary to the letter and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. It also runs counter to the principles of multilateralism, international law, sovereignty and free trade — principles that we hold dear and that this body has championed over the years.

In this regard, we welcome the decision taken last year by the United States to remove a number of restrictions on travel to Cuba and on the transfer of money and postal orders to Cuba from the United States.

Nigeria reiterates that constructive engagement and peaceful negotiations remain the only acceptable means of advancing long-term peace and stability. We appeal to the international community to prevail upon both countries to move towards constructive and productive engagement geared towards reaching a definitive resolution of their differences, leading to the lifting of the longest lasting trade embargo in human history.

The Federal Government of Nigeria maintains friendly relations with all States and does not favour unilateral punitive measures to settle political disputes. Consequently, Nigeria reiterates its position in favour of resolution 65/6. We have thus voted in favour of the lifting of the economic embargo against Cuba.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines):

> "The world must stand together to demonstrate that international law is not an empty promise" (*A/64/PV.3, p. 11*).
>
> "No one nation can or should try to dominate another nation. No world order that elevates one nation or group of people over another will succeed. ... The traditional divisions between nations of the South and North make no sense in an interconnected world, nor do alignments of nations rooted in the cleavages of a long-gone Cold War.
>
> "The time has come to realize that the old habits and ... arguments are irrelevant to the challenges faced by our peoples." (*ibid., p. 10*)

The words that I have just read were not penned by my delegation; they were quoted from the speech delivered by our esteemed friend and brother, President Barack Obama of the United States, in his inaugural address to the General Assembly one year ago. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines wholeheartedly aligns itself with those words, as we do with the statements made today on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China.

President Obama's words are particularly significant in the context of the ongoing United States embargo against Cuba, now well into its fifth decade. If we are to establish international law as more than an empty promise, then the embargo, which violates international law and norms, must end. If we are to abandon the cleavages of a long gone Cold War, then this relic of that ideological conflict must similarly be abandoned. And if we agree than one nation must not be elevated over another, then surely, no super-Power should subject a small island to decades of punitive persecution.

For the past 18 years, the Members of the United Nations have spoken out, in increasingly overwhelming numbers, against the embargo. Most of the friends of the United States — and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines counts itself firmly among its closest allies — have repeatedly decried the rationale, impact, utility and legality of the embargo. Indeed, there may be no clearer and more long-standing example of the United States disregard of overwhelming international opinion than its continued unilateral imposition of this senseless blockade.

A report issued last year by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) concludes that "the President has discretion to further ease regulatory restrictions" on a series of important incremental measures that are currently causing suffering among Cubans. It is most unfortunate that any foreign president exerts such a direct and negative influence on the day-to-day lives of another nation's citizens. These regulatory restrictions cannot continue to act as a noose to be selectively tightened and loosened at the whim of any one country, or the discretion of any one president, in flagrant disregard of international law and norms.

The GAO report goes on to state that the embargo cannot be fully eliminated without the repeal of certain

legislation by the United States Congress or "without determining that a transition government or a democratically elected government is in power in Cuba". However, just last year, the United States President stood before us and gave voice to a widely held belief when he said that,

> "Democracy cannot be imposed on any nation from the outside. Each society must search for its own path, and no path is perfect. Each country will pursue a path rooted in the culture of its people and in its past traditions. And I admit that America has too often been selective in its promotion of democracy." (*ibid., p. 14*)

In this year's address to the United Nations, President Obama again disavowed any idea of unilaterally forcing another independent nation to follow a prescribed and preconceived political path, when he said, "make no mistake: the ultimate success of democracy in the world will not come because the United States dictates it" (see *A/65/PV.11*). Cathartic and laudable as such statements may be, they ring hollow when viewed through the prism of existing and stringently applied legislation that unabashedly attempts to externally impose a cookie-cutter concept of democracy, totally divorced from the culture, history and context of the Cuban people.

Over the years, the embargo has been a policy in search of a justification. At one point, it was to contain the so called security threat posed by Cuba. At another, it was to thwart the perceived ideological menace of Communism in our hemisphere. Then, it was in retaliation for expropriated property, after that, to establish a particular type of democracy. Today, we hear of human rights. Many other rationalizations have been similarly advanced and discarded over the years. But, amid shifting justifications, the embargo has remained in force, with its only accomplishments being the decades of hardships it has visited upon the Cuban people and the narrow political gains it may engender within certain domestic constituencies.

In this period of economic and food crises, the impact of the embargo seems particularly cruel. Access to medical hardware, as we heard earlier, modern medication, basic foodstuffs, construction materials, heavy equipment and spare parts are all severely restricted by the embargo. Recent token measures in the areas of individual travel and remittances by Cuban families living overseas have not affected those major impediments to Cuba's development and advancement.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines finds itself in an era in which our small population and economy — not to mention the waning military significance of the Caribbean region — have allowed our needs and concerns to be overlooked by those who see the world only through the prism of their narrow and immediate interests. However, Cuba has remained a staunch and abiding partner in the development of our country. Cuban universities have graduated over 250 Vincentian students and are currently playing host to 150 more. Cuban's surgeons have performed operations on over 3,000 Vincentian patients. Cuban doctors have brought quality medical care and expertise to the most remote areas of our country. Even as we speak, Cuban engineers, architects and workers are labouring alongside Vincentians in the construction of a modern hospital and an international airport.

As far wealthier nations and institutions have looked askance at our developmental struggles and offered only dubious prescriptions and platitudes, the Cuban people have rolled up their sleeves and given freely of themselves in a manner that has touched the hearts and souls of the Vincentian people. No dollar amount can adequately reflect the value of that support, solidarity and partnership, for which the Cubans have asked nothing in return. Our appreciation cannot be overstated.

My delegation would like to conclude as it began, with the stirring and inspiring words of United States President Barack Obama's inaugural address to the General Assembly last year.

> "The choice is ours. We can be remembered as the generation that chose to drag the arguments of the twentieth century into the twenty-first, and that put off hard choices, refused to look ahead and failed to keep pace because we defined ourselves by what we were against instead of what we were for, or we can be a generation that chooses to see the shoreline beyond the rough waters ahead, that comes together to serve the common interests of human beings, and finally gives meaning to the promise imbedded in the name given to this institution — the United Nations. (*A/64/PV.3, p. 11*)

Let us put the twentieth century arguments behind us. Let us forever forswear illegal unilateral

action. Let us instead look to the future, keep pace with the times and heed the insistent and consistent voice of the international community. This resolution is not simply some ritualistic annual rite of the United Nations; it is a matter of life and death for 11.5 million Cubans.

We in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines believe in change, and we live in hope that there will no longer be any need for us to gather next year to vote on this resolution yet again.

Mr. Sin Son Ho (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea welcomes the adoption, during this morning's plenary meeting, of resolution 65/6, entitled "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba". We would like to reiterate our position in that regard.

As it did last year, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has once again voted in favour of this resolution as an expression of our full support for and solidarity with the Government and people of Cuba in their struggle for justice and social progress, as well as in adherence to our consistent position of opposing all forms of interference and threats or uses of force and sanctions against sovereign States.

The consecutive adoption of this resolution by the General Assembly for the past 18 years, including various outcome documents of major international and regional meetings, including the Non-Aligned Movement Summit, manifest vividly that the United States sanctions and embargo against Cuba constitute a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and international law. It is deplorable, however, that the unilateral economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba remains intact after 50 years, despite the strong demand and expectations of the overwhelming majority of Member States of the United Nations.

No sign of any change in the policy of the United States Administration on the embargo against Cuba has been seen for the past year since the adoption of resolution 64/6. On the contrary, the United States Administration approved $40 million for the fiscal years 2009 and 2010, with the aim of encouraging subversive programmes against Cuba. If such an amount of money were allocated and used for supporting the socio-economic development of developing countries rather than for the subversion of sovereign States, one could easily imagine the positive effect that would result.

The unilateral and cruel embargo by the United States against Cuba has already caused hundreds of billions of dollars in losses in various areas of the country's economy. It has also severely impacted the social life and well-being of the Cuban people, thus creating a great obstacle to the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in that country.

The United States embargo against Cuba shows that the routinely uttered commitment by the United States to the implementation of the outcomes of major United Nations summits and conferences is merely lip service and that its deeds in reality impede the efforts of other countries for socio-economic development, thereby hampering United Nations-wide efforts for the well-being and advancement of all human beings.

It is not only Cuba but also several other countries that suffered economic losses during the past year because of the United States unilateral and extraterritorial embargo. This absurd embargo — whereby one country unilaterally applies its own measures to the economic and trade sectors of other countries beyond its own territorial scope — deserves denunciation and rejection.

By restricting the constitutional rights of its citizens who wish to travel to Cuba, the United States Government also contravenes its own Constitution.

In general, the United States policy of embargo against Cuba mocks the entire international community, which demands an end to the embargo. It also constitutes a grave violation of the principles of respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-interference as enshrined in the United Nations Charter and relevant international law. Any coercive measure with a unilateral and extraterritorial nature that pursues sinister political purposes and imposes a political, economic and social system based on a certain country's own perspective should never be tolerated in any way.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is of the view that the United States embargo against Cuba is an illegitimate and inhuman act that can never be justified in terms of political,

legal, moral or humanitarian aspects and constitutes a flagrant, massive and systematic violation of the rights of an entire people. It is also undemocratic, as it aims to overthrow a sovereign State. We therefore strongly denounce the persistent United States embargo against Cuba.

Our delegation avails itself of this opportunity to strongly urge the United States to heed the demand of the international community, observe all relevant General Assembly resolutions adopted so far regarding the embargo against Cuba and take measures to lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo against that country immediately and without any conditions.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will in the future constantly support the just struggle of the Cuban Government and people to terminate the United States sanctions and embargo, and continue to further develop economic and trade relations with Cuba.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

A representative has requested the floor in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members of the General Assembly that statements in exercise of the right of reply should be limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and 5 minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I give the floor to the representative of the delegation of Cuba.

Mr. Rodriguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am very grateful for the words of the 13 speakers who have spoken at this afternoon's unexpected meeting.

With respect to what has been said by the representatives of the United States and the European Union, this is the nineteenth occasion on which the delegation of the United States has repeated the same thing. The blockade is an act of economic warfare and an act of genocide. Last year I read out articles from the relevant conventions. Has the United States Department of State not done its homework or studied this issue? I will read it again. I have before me the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which in article 2 states that

> "In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts ... : ... Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; [or] Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

I already read here this morning the famous memorandum by Mr. Mallory. These are not ideological arguments from the past. The embargo is an old vestige held over from the Cold War. It is not an issue of rhetoric, but rather one of aggression against the Cuban people. The aim of the United States is not to help or support our people. We know that the embargo causes hardship and suffering. It does not cause deaths because the Cuban revolution prevents them. How can the United States delegation explain the punishment of Cuban children as described here? If it wanted to help or support the Cuban people, the only thing it would have to do is to lift the embargo. Why are Americans prevented from visiting our country and receiving information first-hand? Why are they restricting so called people-to-people contacts?

The pretext for the embargo has continued to change. First, it was the supposed membership in the Sino-Soviet axis; then it was the so-called exporting of revolution to Latin America, followed by the presence of Cuban troops in Africa, which were there to help defeat apartheid and preserve the independence of Angola and achieve that of Namibia. And then it was manipulation of human rights; but the embargo is a brutal violation of the human rights of the Cuban people.

We are ready to discuss violations of human rights. We can begin with the concentration camp in Guantánamo, where torture is exercised and there is no right of habeas corpus, it is the realm of military commissions outside the rule of law. Could the United States delegation explain here what happened in the Abu Ghraib, Bagram and Nama camps? Has the present Government brought any charges against those responsible? Have any charges been brought against those in the European Governments who authorized the secret prisons in Europe and the secret flights of the Central Intelligence Agency with people who had been kidnapped? Could the representative of the European Union clarify that? We can also talk about Wikileaks. Could they tell us something about the atrocities referred to in the 75,000 documents on crimes in Afghanistan and the 400,000 documents on Iraq?

What can the United States delegation tell us about extrajudicial executions proclaimed by Bush in his famous 2003 State of the Union address, to the applause of Congress? What has the present Government done vis-à-vis those who are responsible? Perhaps the Joint Special Operations Command has been dissolved. Were the executive orders and authorizations reversed, or are they still in force? Is it true that the chief of that command, General McChrystal, was reporting directly to Vice President Cheney? We could also discuss the brutal violence and high technology that they call counter-insurgency.

Changes in Cuba are a matter for the Cuban people. We will change all that has to be changed for the benefit of the Cuban people, but we will not be asking for the opinion of the United States Government. We choose our destiny freely. That is why we had a revolution. Those changes will be sovereign changes, not gestures. We know that for the United States the only thing that will suffice will be to establish a pro-yanki Government in Cuba, but that will not happen.

If the United States Government wants to advance in telecommunications, then it should lift the measures of the embargo that make business in that area impossible, put a stop to the pillaging of Cuban funds in United States banks and eliminate the provisions of the embargo that severely restrict Cubans' access to the Internet. If they want cooperation among universities, they should lift restrictions on academic, student, scientific and cultural exchanges and allow universities to establish agreements among themselves. If they want cooperation on drug trafficking, counter-terrorism, trafficking in persons, natural disasters and postal services, then they should at least respond to the proposal we made over a year ago without any preconditions.

The Government of the United States has changed, but the funding of internal subversion in Cuba is still the same. A high-ranking official of the United States Agency for International Development yesterday confirmed to journalist Tracey Eaton that in the most recent period $15.6 million had been sent to "individuals on the ground in Cuba". That is how they refer to their mercenaries.

Hostile radio and television broadcasts also continue.

The five Cuban anti-terrorists continue to be unjustly imprisoned. Recently, Geraldo Hernández Nordelo was groundlessly placed in solitary confinement, where he is denied medical treatment. Admitted international terrorists such as Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles freely walk about Miami, where they are even politically active.

There are talks on immigration, but the hostile immigration policy continues with the Cuban Adjustment Act and the wet-foot dry-foot policy.

Once again, it is totally false that the United States and Cuba are economic partners. Agricultural sales violate all regulations and practices of international trade and freedom of navigation. Lies have been told in this Hall regarding alleged donations to Cuba from non-governmental organizations amounting to $237 million.

The blockade is abusively extraterritorial and affects everyone in this Hall. It is not a bilateral matter.

I have little to add to what has already been said about the European Union. We do not recognize any moral or political authority whatsoever on the part of that body to qualify it to make criticisms about human rights. It would do better to concern itself with its brutal anti-immigrant policy, the deportation of minorities, the violent repression of demonstrators and the growing social exclusion of its unemployed and low-income sectors. Shamelessly and disgracefully, the European Parliament devotes itself to awarding prizes to the paid agents of the United States Government in Cuba. Now it says that the so called common position has been left behind. We shall see. The facts will speak for themselves. But the European Union is dreaming if it believes that it will be able to normalize relations with Cuba while the so-called common position exists.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the only speaker in exercise of the right of reply.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 41?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.